



United States Department of the Interior

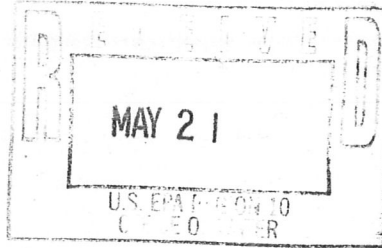


FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services Anchorage
605 West 4th Avenue, Room 62
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2249

WAES

Mr. Michael J. Lidgard
NPDES Permit Unit
U.S. EPA, Region 10
1200 Sixth Ave
Seattle, WA 98101



May 19, 1999

Re: John M. Asplund Water Pollution Control Facility, Anchorage

Dear Mr. Lidgard:

This letter is in response to your letter of May 6, 1999, received in our office on May 10, 1999 in which you request a list of endangered and threatened species and critical habitats pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq. 87 stat 884, as amended) (Act). The following listed and delisted species occur in the project area:

SPECIES

American peregrine falcon
Arctic peregrine falcon

(*Falco peregrinus anatum*)
(*Falco peregrinus tundrius*)

ESA STATUS

Endangered
Delisted

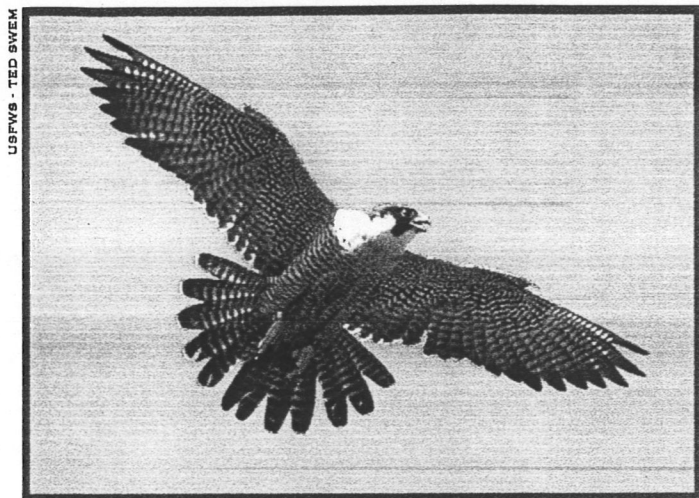
Bald eagles also occur in the area of proposed activity but are not on the list of endangered or threatened species in Alaska. They are, however, protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

I have enclosed a copy of the peregrine falcon fact sheet to aid you in determining whether your proposed project may adversely affect threatened or endangered species. If you would like additional assistance in determining whether this project is likely to adversely impact listed species, please provide us with detailed information regarding project plans.

This letter relates only to endangered species under our jurisdiction. It does not address species under the jurisdiction of National Marine Fisheries Service, or other legislation or responsibilities under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Clean Water Act, or National Environmental Policy Act. If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please feel free to contact me at: 907/271-2778 (phone), 907/271-2786 (fax), or by e-mail at greg_balogh@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Gregory R Balogh
Gregory R. Balogh
Endangered Species Biologist



Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Status

Three subspecies of peregrine falcon occur in Alaska. The American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) is endangered throughout its range (*Federal Register*, June 2, 1970; October 13, 1970; March 20, 1984). The arctic peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus tundrius*) was removed from the endangered species list in 1994 (*Federal Register*, October 5, 1994). The Peale's peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus pealei*) has never been listed as threatened or endangered.

Description

Peregrine falcons are medium-sized falcons, about 37-46 centimeters (14-18 inches) long, with narrow, pointed wings that span up to 116 centimeters (46 inches). Adults have a blue-gray back, white chest, and dark barring below. Their head is dark, with a distinctive dark wedge that extends below the eye. Young falcons less than one year old have brown backs and buffy chests with brown streaks. The three subspecies are very similar in appearance and difficult to distinguish in the field. The American peregrine falcon is slightly darker than the northern subspecies, the arctic peregrine falcon, with which it overlaps in range.

Range and Population Level

The endangered subspecies, the American peregrine falcon, breeds throughout much of North America from Mexico to Alaska. In Alaska, it nests in the forested interior, mainly on cliffs along rivers or near lakes, and migrates south to winter from the southern United States to Latin America. The number of American peregrine falcons nesting in Alaska declined to as low as 50 to 100 pairs in the early 1970's. Today the population is slowly increasing, and an estimated 400 pairs now nest in Alaska.

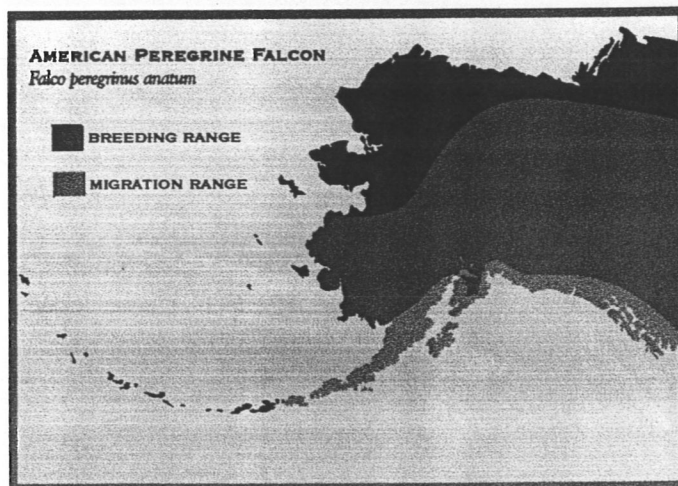
Arctic peregrine falcons nest in treeless tundra regions of northern Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, migrating south to the southern United States and Latin America in winter. Arctic peregrine falcon populations also declined through the 1970's, but the subspecies is now recovering and an estimated 200 to 250 pairs currently nest in Alaska. Much of the arctic peregrine falcon's remote range remains unsurveyed, but it is thought that a few thousand pairs occur rangewide. The Peale's peregrine falcon is a yearround resident of its coastal habitat, which extends from northern Washington State to the Aleutian Islands.

Habitat and Habits

Peregrine falcon nests are usually located on a cliff ledge or bluff near rivers, lakes, or marine waters that provide habitat for the shorebirds, songbirds, waterfowl, and seabirds which the falcons eat. Peregrine falcons are swift flyers, often catching their prey in spectacular midair dives of up to 200 miles per hour (320 kilometers per hour).

Reasons for Current Status

The principal cause of the peregrine falcon's decline was exposure to organochlorine pesticides, such as DDT. These stable compounds accumulate in the food chain, with higher concentrations found in predators such as falcons. Although large doses may kill individuals, organochlorines primarily affect peregrines by causing them to lay thin-shelled eggs that break before hatching. Even though pesticides have not been widely used in Alaska, peregrine falcons that nest in Alaska are often exposed to these chemicals on their wintering grounds. Other less significant factors that may have affected peregrines include shooting and loss of habitat due to human encroachment.



Management and Protection

Restriction of the use of chlorinated pesticides in the United States since 1972 is the primary factor allowing peregrine falcons to recover in much of their range. Their recovery has also been enhanced by stiff penalties for shooting them, prohibition against the taking of wild peregrines for falconry, and protection of nesting areas. Populations of arctic peregrine falcons have increased sufficiently to no longer require legal protection for the subspecies under the Endangered Species Act. However, arctic peregrine falcons, like other raptors, are sensitive to disturbance during the nesting season, so activities within the vicinity of nest sites should be minimized to help ensure the continued health and recovery of populations.

In order to protect nest sites and the habitat surrounding nesting areas of the endangered subspecies, the American peregrine falcon, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recommends the following guidelines for projects and activities in the vicinity of American peregrine falcon nests. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid the illegal take of American peregrine falcons, and reduce the potential for adverse effects to the species. If these guidelines cannot be followed, consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is required. Under federal law, all federal agencies must consult with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on any project they authorize, fund, or carry out that may affect American peregrine falcons or other listed species.

✦ Within 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) of nest sites:

- ▶ Between April 15 and August 15, aircraft should maintain a minimum altitude of 1500 feet (460 meters) above nest level.
- ▶ Between April 15 and August 15, ground level activity should be avoided except on existing roads.
- ▶ Habitat alterations or the construction of permanent facilities should be avoided.

✦ Within 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) of nest sites:

- ▶ Between April 15 and August 15, activities having a high noise level should be avoided.
- ▶ Permanent facilities having high noise levels, sustained human activity, or altering limited high quality habitat (e.g. ponds, lakes, wetlands, and riparian habitats) should be avoided.

✦ Within 15 miles (24 kilometers) of nest sites:

- ▶ Alteration of limited, high quality habitat should be avoided. Of particular concern are ponds, lakes, wetlands and riparian habitats.

References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1982. Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan - Alaska Population. Anchorage, Alaska. 69 pp.

For More Information

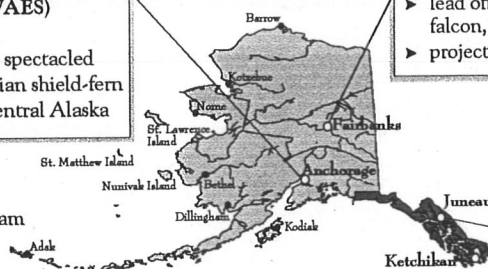
Contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Field Office in your area.



Anchorage Field Office
Western Alaska Ecological Services (WAES)
 Phone (907) 271-2888
 ▶ lead office for Aleutian Canada goose, spectacled eider, short-tailed albatross, and Aleutian shield-fern
 ▶ project review for western and southcentral Alaska

Visit these web pages:

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program
<http://www.fws.gov/~r9endspp/endspp.html>
- Alaska Natural Heritage Program
http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/enri/aknhp_web/index.html



Fairbanks Field Office
Northern Alaska Ecological Services (NAES)
 Phone (907) 456-0203
 ▶ lead office for Steller's eider, American peregrine falcon, and Eskimo curlew
 ▶ project review for northern Alaska

Juneau Field Office
Southeast Alaska Ecological Services (SEES)
 Phone (907) 586-7240
 Ketchikan Sub-office, phone (907) 225-9691
 ▶ status review for old-growth forest species in southeast Alaska
 ▶ project review for southeast Alaska

For more copies of this and other "Threatened and Endangered Species Fact Sheets" contact the Anchorage Field Office at (907) 271-2888.

Design/text/graphics by Bev Short